

# BEIJING TODAY

## COMMERCE



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## Spring in the mountains

Beijing is surrounded by several scenic mountains that are nationally protected nature parks.

Make time this spring to check out some of the most beautiful sights within 100 kilometers of the capital's downtown.

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## China losing its appeal to AmCham

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## WeChat new avenue for local artists

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# Paid emotes put WeChat in competition with LINE

By BAO CHENGRONG  
Beijing Today Staff

The WeChat of 2014 is a very different product from what Tencent unveiled to the world in 2011.

The app has grown to include an English interface, games center and payment zone.

Among the paid features introduced in the 5.0 release of WeChat last August were paid emoticons. Tencent's first paid emoticons were commissioned from LINE Corp, the maker of a rival chat program.

Unfortunately, LINE's characters like Kaka the chicken failed to win the hearts and money of users who blasted its images are boring and poorly designed.

Seeking more inspiring art, Tencent cooperated with top animation companies such as Disney and Universal Studios to license animated images of Ultraman and Nowara Shinosuke. It also began snapping up the licenses to characters appearing new animated films, such as Beedo in *Despicable Me*.

But more interestingly, Tencent has started cooperating with Chinese illustrators to introduce their original works through the platform.

Crazy Frog and Happy Horse, by Liu Qian, are among the most recent additions.

Liu's designs, disturbing at first glance, graft horse and frog heads onto apparently human figures. Liu said she planned to only submit one or the other for final review, but decided to sell both characters "since they looked funny."

WeChat has very strict standards for what emoticons can be sold, Liu said. "My characters had to have smooth movement and a refined design, and they could be no more than 50 kilobytes," she said.

Only 16 of the 25 images she created for WeChat passed inspection, and none of the 10 illustrators she recommended to Tencent were hired.

Liu was paid a one-time, undisclosed sum. She does not receive royalties for the sale of her characters through WeChat.

The app's store has 31 emoticon sets, 20 of which are paid. Each set sells for 6 yuan.

Liu said her works will be available exclusively through WeChat, though the duration of her contact remains secret.

Crazy Frog and Happy Horse are

Liu's second emoticons after finding fame on Weibo with her Youngest Chicken. Although Sina bought the rights to some of her works for sale, most images in her Youngest Chicken series are free.

But if Tencent is hoping to win new users with emoticons, it is entering the game comparatively late.

LINE's instant messaging client earned \$17 million (105 million yuan) in the first quarter of 2013 and \$27 million in the second quarter. A significant amount of that money came from its emoticon microtransactions.

LINE users send 7 billion instant messages per day, a seventh of which are emoticons.

Yu Hao, a user from Taiwan, said LINE's emoticons are bigger than WeChat's. Its popular characters include Steamed Bun Man & James, Brown Bear and Cony, as well as Cherry Coco. Each paid set includes about 40 expressions.

Users who purchase the sets can also get extra emoticon packages: as many as 3,400 expressions in 80 sets. LINE's packages include popular characters like Hello Kitty and Winnie the Pooh, as well as animated images of real people like Korean rapper Psy.

LINE bills its sets at \$1.99 (12 yuan), twice the price of WeChat's.

In the domestic market, WeChat also faces strong competition from the social app Momo. Unlike WeChat, Momo's emoticons depict situations such as chucking a brick or flipping a table.

Wang Yijian, a commentator at Sootoo, said LINE's success may be because of its emoticons containing a cultural link for users, and that's why users are more willing to pay.

Many users also consider sending an emoticon more convenient than sending a text message, he said.

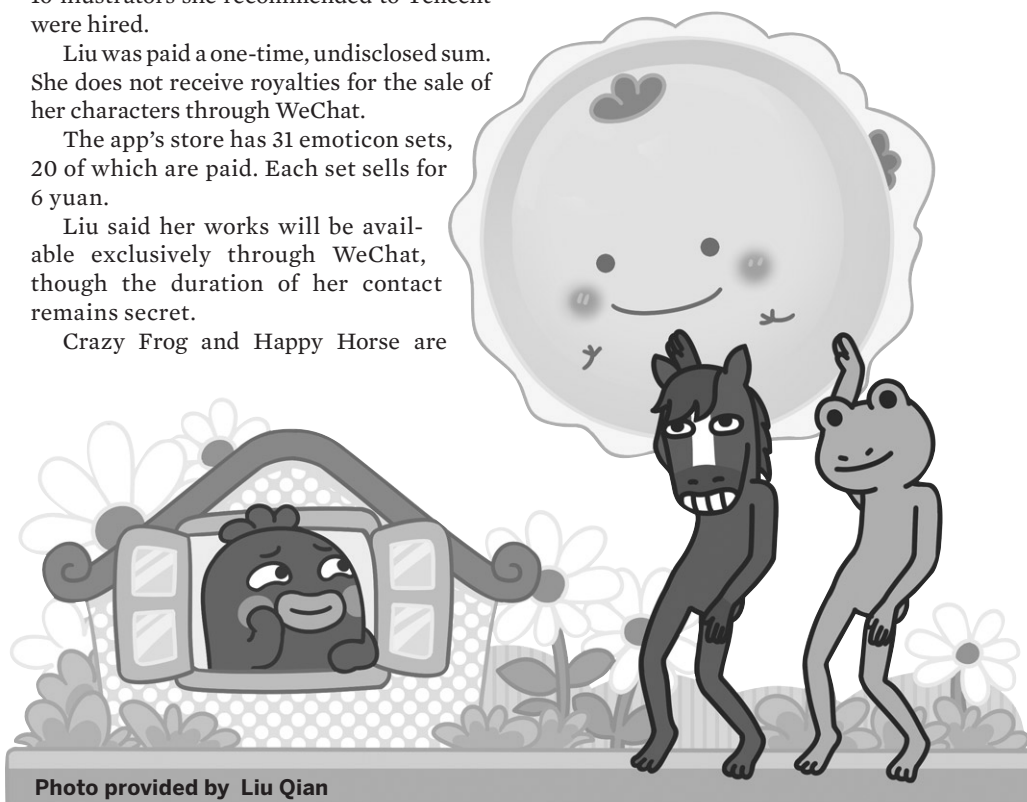


Photo provided by Liu Qian

# Art in isolation

## Exhibition calls attention to the world of autistic children



Chen Meng's work  
Photo provided by He Shujie



Photos by Bao Chengrong



By **BAO CHENGRONG**  
*Beijing Today Staff*

As part of the 7th World Autism Awareness Day, Sanlitun is hosting an exhibition of art by autistic children to call attention to their education needs.

The exhibition, organized by Beijing Golden Wings Art Rehabilitation Service Center for Disabled Children, opened on March 30 to display the works of 42 autistic children.

Zhang Junru, founder of the center, said autistic children hunger for the power to express themselves, to be recognized by others and to have the freedom to create their own art.

Artists from home and abroad were invited to display their works and guide autistic children in the process of drawing and painting.

Guo Tai, one of the local artists, said that although the children are young, their inner world is richer and more colorful than that of their peers.

Apart from the paintings, renowned photographer Xia Gaoqiang was also invited to display his pictures of autistic children at the exhibition.

Autism and related disorders remain poorly understood and relatively unknown in China.

Many Chinese children with autism are bullied and struggle to find access to what is supposed to be compulsory education. There are more than 1.5 million Chinese children diagnosed with autism, but fewer than 2 percent are able to get the same access to education as their peers.

Cai Xuemei, the mother of one autistic

child, said she hopes her son can be educated in an ordinary school to help him adapt to society. But other parents in her community have voiced strong objection.

When enrolling her son in school, Cai had to go door to door, collecting signatures and persuading a minimum of 57 other parents not to oppose her son's enrollment.

Cai's case is hardly unusual. According to development reports, most Chinese parents with autistic children want them to study in normal schools. The majority are rejected.

A kindergarten in Qingdao, Shandong Province is one among the few that is open to training more than 6,000 autistic children. However, only 20 percent of the students get the chance to continue their studies in elementary school.

Sun Zhongkai, executive director of Beijing Stars & Education Institute for Autism, said allowing autistic children to study with non-autistic children may be the trend, but the education and social support systems are not prepared.

Sun said simply allowing students to stay in the class is not enough – autistic students need experienced teachers and aides who can meet their individualized needs.

Zhou Meng, vice director of the Shenyang Psychology Institute, said parents should pay more attention and help their children to improve their talents

rather than expect them to fit into the public education system.

He Shujie, mother of an autistic child named Chen Meng, is practicing "natural education." Chen has withdrawn from school and continues to focus on developing his talents in opaque water-color painting.

For most autistic children, discovery of their strengths is essential to help them earn a living.

Yang Guangxue, one of the country's top experts in autism education, said World Autism Awareness Day is important to help dispel the misunderstandings and ignorance that surround the disorder.

But Yang said understanding and support must also extend to the parents of autistic children. Many who do not understand the disorder blame it on the parents even though it is a genetic disease, he said.

Yang said education is essential to improve the social and cultural atmosphere for autistic children.

Apart from offering legal protection and diverse learning channels, films and TV series depicting people living with the disorder can be a way to spread knowledge and win social support, he said.

# EU plans to simplify visas, bolster economic growth

By LIU XIAOCHEN  
Beijing Today Staff

In acknowledgment of the cumbersome, lengthy hurdles foreigners face when traveling to the EU, the European Commission submitted a proposal at the start of this month to simplify the application procedure for people planning a short stay.

Easier access to the Schengen Area would help travelers to reunite with relatives and friends, conduct business and buttress growth in the tourism, restaurant and transportation industries.

It could also help create jobs, analysts said.

According to a recent research report published by European Commission, the EU lost 660 million potential visitors from six countries, including China, due to the cumbersome visa procedures in 2012.

The report showed more flexible visa rules could boost tourism rates by between 30 and 60 percent. This may mean €130 billion (1.1 trillion yuan) in direct spending in various fields such as accommodations, food and drink, transportation, entertainment and shopping.

That money could create 1.3 million related job opportunities throughout the EU, it said.

The proposal would reduce the pro-



China is one of the main targets for the EU's simplified visas.

CFP Photo

cessing deadline from 15 to 10 days and make it possible to lodge a visa application in another EU member's consulate when the target member state is not represented.

The proposal suggested substantial allowances for regular travelers, including mandatory issuing of three-year mul-

ti-ple-entry visas, simplified application forms, online visa applications and the right of member states to grant 15-day visas at the border of any Schengen State.

It also provides for the possibility of member states to issue visa for visitors attending major events and a new class of tourism visa that would allow legal

travel within the Schengen area for up to one year.

"Europe needs a smarter visa policy. We need to attract more tourists, business people, researchers, students, artists and cultural professionals to our shores," said Cecilia Malmström, commissioner for Home Affairs. "Now, we want to boost our economy and create new jobs by underlining the economic dimension in our visa policy, while keeping a high level of security at our borders."

"Our proposal will help the European tourism industry at a time when international competition is becoming increasingly fierce with a growing number of countries relying on tourism for growth," said Antonio Tajani, the European Commission vice president responsible for industry and entrepreneurship.

The proposals would have to be approved by the Council of the European Union and the European Parliament first, which could happen in 2015 at the earliest.

Changes would apply to all EU member states that have signed the Schengen Agreement, as well as the associated states of Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland.

Bulgaria, Croatia, Ireland, Cyprus, Romania and the UK will not be affected by this policy change.

## British embassy cultivates social entrepreneurs

By LIU XIAOCHEN  
Beijing Today Staff

The British Council is inviting Social Enterprise UK to collaborate on its 2014 social entrepreneur skill training (SfSE) session from May 27 to 29.

Professionals working in a social enterprise field are being invited to provide a set of new courses focused on strategic planning, practical experience and case studies.

Head of Social Enterprise UK Dan Gregory, UnLtd's former director of operator Victoria Anderson, British social entrepreneur Michael Norton and senior trainer in domestic social enterprises Steve Koon will attend to offer guidance.

Participating trainers will help attendees to develop a strategy by analyzing social enterprise case studies. Trainees will also learn how financial management, social media, marketing, brand development and franchising apply to social enterprises, and how to

establish a platform for communicating with their investors.

Lectures will introduce the social enterprise development environment in the UK, Hong Kong and greater East Asia.

SfSE is a worldwide project operated by the British Council and its cooperating partners. The project has been launched in 19 countries, including China. It supports social enterprises to solve social and environmental problems in a commercial way, and to make a positive impact on their communities.

Founded in 2009, the project provides skill training, planning and support to social entrepreneurs, NGO staff, community leaders and youths.

SfSE also establishes partnerships with many institutes and social investors. These partnerships help trainees locate successful social enterprises in various fields and to build employment opportunities.

Those interested in learning how to run a social enterprise can sign up online at [britishcouncil.org.cn/sfse-application](http://britishcouncil.org.cn/sfse-application) before April 24.



SfSE

British Council Photo

# Job fair seeks China's German speakers

By LIU XIAOCHEN  
Beijing Today Staff

The German Chamber of Commerce is opening its annual job fair to recruit Chinese workers for German enterprises.

The 8th Sino-German Job Fair opens April 26. Students and young professionals are encouraged to attend to connect with German employers and network with other young professionals.

Unlike past years, organizers are creating a new "Virtual Job Fair" designed to precede the opening of the main fair. The virtual job fair is organized in cooperation with Alumni portal Deutschland (APD).

This combination is intended to help interested applicants with education experience in Germany to tap into an existing alumni network to exchange experiences, maintain or further develop their German language skills and explore career opportunities in the Sino-German business environment.

The virtual job fair offers many innovative features similar to the onsite job fair experience. Users can visit a company's virtual booth and chat with a representative who will view their profile. They can also gather information about exhibiting German companies, open vacancies and acquire contact information for a representative before attending the fair.

Interested participants should upload their resume to the virtual job fair site before the opening date. Those who register will get an overview of current companies and profiles of their ideal candidates.



German Chamber of Commerce first launches Virtual Job Fair

CFP Photo

## Job fair

**When:** April 26, 9am-4pm

**Where:** Marriott, Jia 26 Xiaoyun Lu, Chaoyang District

**Tel:** 6539 6685

## Virtual job fair

**When:** April 17, 10am-6 pm

**Web:** alumniportal-deutschland.org

# AmCham polls show foreign businesses losing faith in China

By LIU XIAOCHEN  
Beijing Today Staff

An annual survey of 365 American companies and AmCham China members found a sharp downturn in the businesses' China outlook.

The 2014 China Business Climate Survey Report polled opinions on the investment environment, human resources, intellectual property rights, transformation and the other related aspects.

Although American businesses remain optimistic about the short-term business climate in China, many complained about the government's increasingly loose attention to intellectual property theft and rising labor costs, according to the survey.

The report cited growing frustrations over unclear laws and licensing requirements that favor domestic companies, pollution and Internet censorship so severe that it often prevents the companies from



City in the smog

CFP Photo

conducting business.

Like all private companies, AmCham members are facing a number of challenges in doing business in China such as rising labor costs, inconsistent or unclear laws and regulations, difficulties in obtaining reliable data and the overwhelming

influence of state-owned enterprises.

Polls found that 68 percent of AmCham members characterized China's protection of intellectual property as "ineffective," while 40 percent of them said foreign companies are being singled out in the government's price-fixing and anti-cor-

ruption campaigns.

Almost half the AmCham members said they had difficulties recruiting or retaining senior executive talent because of the pollution.

"[China's] economy is under considerable stress," said Mark Duval, president of AmCham China and former executive at Motorola China. "Negative signs include easing growth rates, rising costs and declining margins. Some investment plans are being scaled back."

Smog is a major concern for human resource managers, Duval said.

The report said China's economy and overall business environment have become clearer to assess after years of rapid growth.

The Shanghai Free Trade Zone and bilateral China-US investment treaty are important components of China's reform agenda and important issues for AmCham members, it said.

# Head for the hills!

## Mountain climbing outings in the spring



Wulingshan's sunflowers CFP Photo

**By LIU XIAOCHEN**  
*Beijing Today Staff*

Mild weather makes spring the best season for mountain climbing in the capital. Beijing is surrounded by several mountains that are protected national parks full of beautiful scenery.

A trip to the mountains is a relaxing alternative to the crowds at the Fragrant Hills. Although they may not appear challenging, most climbs involve heavy aerobic activity. Try to pick a mountain that is suitable for your fitness level.

### Wuling Mountain

Wuling Mountain is a national natural reserve. The main peak is 2,118 meters above sea level and 95 percent of the mountain is covered in forest.

Wuling Mountain is part of the Yanshan range.

The climb offers forest views broken up by steep mountain ranges, streams and ancient architecture. There are also hundreds of rare animals and plants living in the reserve.

The mountain reserve is split across Miyun County and Hebei Province. Visitors starting from the city center can enter the reserve through the north gate. Many scenic spots are located along the drive.

Due to the long distance, it is best to stay overnight and return home on the next day.

**When:** 8 am-5 pm

**Where:** Xinglong County, Chengde, Hebei Province

**Entry:** 120 yuan

**Tel:** 0314-5082238

### Baihua Mountain

Baihua Mountain is a national natural reserve located 100 kilometers from Beijing's city center. The reserve extends across the districts of Mentougou and Fangshan.

The mountain is popular for its flowers, and there are many varieties that blossom throughout the year.

The main peak and sunny side is in Fangshan District. Climbers should start from Fangshan District. They can also drive up to the 2,000-meter peak.

**Where:** Qingshui Town, Mentougou District; or Shijiaying County, Fangshan District

**When:** 8 am to 6 pm

**Entry:** 60 yuan

**Tel:** 60856110

### Yunmeng Mountain

Yunmeng Mountain is a national forest park located in Huairou District. The park is famous for the view from its peak, its waterfalls and many ancient constructions.

Most people tackle the climb between April and October. In April, the mountain's azalea flowers are in full bloom.

It's the most popular month for sightseeing, light exercise and tree planting.

Many families live in small villages around the scenic area. Some operate home restaurants selling Huairou's famous rainbow trout, boiled chicken with mushroom, Chinese toon shoots and eggs, as well as wild herbs and salted duck eggs.

**Where:** Houshanpu Village, Liulimiao Town, Huairou District

**When:** 8:30 am-5:30 pm

**Entry:** 35 yuan

**Tel:** 61622481/2381

### Mangshan Forest Park

Mangshan Forest Park is Beijing's largest national forest park. Its highest peak is 640 meters above sea level.

The climb mostly follows a set of stairs with many scenic spots along the way. The steps are formed from more than 3,000 boulder strips, making it the longest staircase in the capital.

The 10-meter-tall Mangshan Buddha is located halfway up the mountain. There is an artificial lake at the peak, which is used as the hydraulic power station of the Ming Tombs. Visitors can go boating on the lake whenever it is storing water. The nearby watch tower offers a panoramic view of the Ming Tombs.

**Where:** 2 Mangshan Lu, Changping District

**When:** 9 am-5 pm

**Entry:** 20 yuan

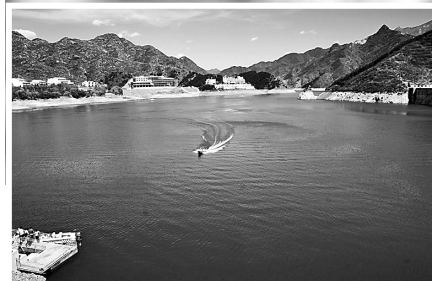
**Tel:** 60711866

### Tips

Climbing requires a lot of oxygen and can harm the body if you're not prepared. Be sure to do some stretches to warm up your muscles and joints before the activity. After climbing, cool down and relax.

Morning is the best time to start a climb. Drink plenty of fluids – more than you think you need! If you are worried about running low on water, drink 400 to 600 milliliters about 10 to 15 minutes before you start the climb.

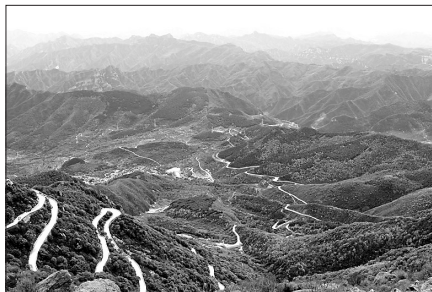
Don't climb too often. Most people can only handle going up or down a mountain 2 to 4 times per week.



Wulingshan



Baihuashan's highway



View from the peak of Baihuashan

## Hotel

### Taste Slovakia introduces European cuisine



Swissotel Beijing, Hong Kong Macau Center is hosting Taste Slovakia, a series of food festivals to introduce the food culture of central Europe.

The five-day event begins with an opening ceremony on April 7. The ceremony will include an exhibition in the art gallery on Floor 2 and a folk fashion show in the lobby.

Apart from cultural and entertainment activities, food will be another attraction. The hotel will also be serving traditional Slovakian food in the Swissotel's cafe.

**Where:** 2 North Chaoyang Men Street, Chaoyang District, Beijing

**When:** April 7-11

**Tel:** 6553 2288

## Stage

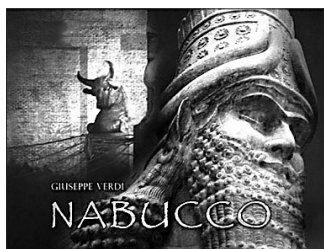
### NCPA's production of Verdi's opera Nabucco

*Nabucco* (short for Nebuchadnezzar) is an opera in four acts by Giuseppe Verdi to an Italian libretto by Temistocle Solera.

Verdi's third opera, the show is based on a Biblical story and 1836 play by Auguste Anicet-Bourgeois and Francis Cornue.

*Nabucco* permanently established Verdi's reputation as a composer. The historical events are used as background for a romantic and political plot. Its first performance took place in 1842 at the Teatro alla Scala, Milan under the original name of *Nabucodonosor*.

*Nabucco* is NCPA's second Giuseppe Verdi's opera of the year. It's worth mentioning that famous stage designer



Ezio Frigerio and costume designer Franca Squarciapino, who has won the Oscar Award for Best Costume Design for *Cyrano de Bergerac*, has participated in the production.

**Where:** National Centre for the Performing Arts (NCPA), 2 Chang'an Jie, Xicheng District

**When:** April 24-27, 7:30-10 pm

**Tel:** 18600208126

**Price:** 100-680 yuan

## School

### Asia's first LEED elementary school

The Chaoyang branch of Beijing Shiyan Erxiao Elementary School was recognized for Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) on March 30.

LEED is a suite of rating systems for the design, construction, operation and maintenance of green buildings, homes and neighborhoods.

The school, located in Guangqufu Community on Guangqu Road, is the first school to be awarded in Asia.

"The school is free from noise and air pollution as we used 12 green and energy saving measures,



which include green illumination systems, indoor air quality monitoring systems, renewable energy technologies and new wind and health system," said Sun Guodong, the designing director of Franshion Properties, which handled construction of the school.

## Music

### The Art Of Fusion

The Art Of Fusion is known for its energetic and melodic live performances and the fusion of many musical genre.

The bands combines elements of electronica, jazz, psychedelic rock, progressive rock, world and symphonic sounds. The band's original sound comes from experimenting with many instrument mixed with electronic effects.

An important element of its sound is the Hang – an instrument invented in Switzerland in 2000.

Rafael Sotomayor, composer and leader of the band, is one of the most recognized Hang players worldwide.

The project has a big audience in Europe and is popular online, with more than 3 million clicks for their videos on YouTube.

**Where:** Yugong Yishan, 3-2 Zhangzizhong Lu, Dongcheng District

**When:** April 17, 9-11 pm

**Price:** 80 yuan (50 yuan presale)



## Activities

### Reduce your risk of cancer!

Cancer is one of the modern world's most deadly diseases. There are many factors that affect your cancer risk, and early detection is key to maintaining health.

In this seminar, Dr. Radha Chaddah, internal medicine specialist, will talk about several types of cancer, how to detect the signs and symptoms and how early screening can save your life.

Chaddah will discuss the following types of cancer: colon cancer, skin cancer, breast cancer and prostate cancer. What you do today defines your health in the future!

**Where:** Suite 105, Wing 1, Kunsha Building, No. 16 Xinyuan Li, Chaoyang District

**When:** April 15, 10-11:30 am

**Price:** Free

**Tel:** 6462 9112

**Email:** seminar@internationalsos.com

### Roundabout Book Fair at Dulwich College



If you are interested in English or other foreign language books, the Roundabout Book Fair is a booklover's paradise!

Children's books, fiction and travel titles are priced from 1 yuan. Paperbacks cost 10 to 20 yuan per book. All proceeds will be donated to needy children.

This year's fair is taking place at Dulwich College's Legend Garden Campus next to Exit 7 on the Airport Expressway.

**Where:** Dulwich College Campus, 89 Capital Airport Road, Shunyi District

**When:** April 12, 10 am-3 pm

**Tel:** 6454 9067

**Website:** dulwich-beijing.cn

## Art

### LeJX: Li Jingxiong solo exhibition

Li Jingxiong's first solo exhibition "LeJX" showcases six of the artist's latest works. The exhibition occupies the obscure terrain between Western and Chinese cultural contexts, suggesting a metaphorical game about geographical art.

In the past few years, Li has had a suspicious attitude toward the identities of artists. In this exhibition, Li



discusses how the present system influences artists' identities through themes such as "death," "geography" and "history." He temporarily

abandons his decade-long education in painting to intervene in contemporary practice from a new perceptive.

**Where:** White Space, 255 Caochangdi, Airport Service Road, Chaoyang District

**When:** Through April 19, 10 am-6 pm

**Email:** info@whitespace-beijing.com

**Website:** whitespace-beijing.com

### Dialectical Territories: Landscapes and abstraction group exhibition

Intelligentsia Gallery is presenting the works of Olga Rodina, Anastasia Soboleva and Elena Tsibizova of Troyka Union; Li Wei; Laura Gil Santana; as well as Cruz Garcia and Nathalie Frankowski of Garcia Frankowski.

Exhibited works include photographs, paintings and sculptures. The exhibition challenges the territorial boundaries that often stand between landscapes and abstraction in the realm of



contemporary art.

In this process of transgression, Intelligentsia Gallery becomes an exploratory field for dialectical transformations. Whether the product of cultural and ethnographic research or mental archaeol-

ogy, the works in the exhibition shift our focus from nature, to the city, to matter and to feelings.

**Where:** Intelligentsia Gallery, Dong Wang Hutong #11, Dongcheng District

**When:** April 20, 4-7 pm

**Tel:** 18310754745

**Email:** intelligentsia.gallery@gmail.com

**Tel:** 6404 2711

**Website:** yugongyishantickets.taobao.com

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